GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2848
ANSWERED ON:17.12.2008
IMPACT OF SMOKING OF BIDIS
Gandhi Smt. Maneka;Singh Shri Uday

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether more Indians die from smoking of bidis than from any other forms of tobacco as reported in the Times of India dated 13 May,2008;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether bidis smoke releases toxic chemicals at levels higher than those of cigarettes;and

(d) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE(SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) & (b): As per report of Tobacco Control in India, 2004 approx. 8-9 Lakh persons die annually due to tobacco attributable diseases. While there are no exact estimates of death due to bidi,as the the report titled "Bidi Smoking and Public Health" 2008, bidi consumption is much higher than cigarette consumption especially in rural areas. As per National Sample Survey, 55th round (1999-2000), 36.5% of households in rural areas and 19% households in urban areas consumed bidi.

(c) & (d): While there are no standardized smoking machine methods to test toxic chemicals found in bidis, there are studies to indicate that bidi smoking is more harmful because of low-porosity of the leaf wrapper.In the absence of significant filtration,the bidi smoke deliveries of high toxic chemicals are greater than cigarettes.Systemic exposure to chemicals in bidi smoke or bidi tobacco also results in damage of chromosomal and respiratory tract.

The Government of India has enacted a Comprehensive Tobacco Control Law in 2003 to protect the non-smokers from ill effects of passive smoking as also the discourage the consumption of tobacco.